



KENTUCKY OFFICE FOR THE BLIND

2006 ANNUAL REPORT

Department for Workforce Investment
Education Cabinet

Kentucky Office for the Blind
209 St. Clair Street, PO Box 757
Frankfort, KY 40602-0757
800-321-6668
<http://blind.ky.gov>



Our Mission . . .

Our mission is to provide opportunities for employment and independence to individuals with visual disabilities.

Consistent with the purpose and principles of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, the Office for the Blind has established the following program principles:

1. We value our consumers and respect their individual dignity, personal responsibility, self-determination, and right to privacy.
2. We presume that our consumers, including individuals with the most significant disabilities, are capable of engaging in competitive employment.
3. We believe that to meet quality employment outcomes, specialized services of the highest quality such as rehabilitation teaching, assistive technology, and orientation and mobility are essential for individuals who are blind.
4. We believe our consumers must be active participants in their own rehabilitation programs, including making meaningful and informed choices about the selection of their vocational goals, objectives, and services they receive.
5. We are committed to our responsibility to provide consumers with program information in an accessible format, including Braille, audio recording, and large print.
6. We value our staff of qualified rehabilitation professionals and believe they can facilitate the accomplishment of consumers' employment goals and objectives.

These principles were developed in collaboration with the State Rehabilitation Council and Office for the Blind staff with input from consumers and other interested parties.



On behalf of the Kentucky Office for the Blind (OFB) and the OFB State Rehabilitation Council, it is my honor to present the annual report for 2006. This report highlights the accomplishments of the year and provides inspiring success stories about a few of the 2,911 consumers we served in 2006.

The mission of the Kentucky Office for the Blind is to provide opportunities for employment and independence to individuals with visual disabilities. We believe to meet quality employment outcomes and meaningful independence, specialized services are essential. OFB provides these services through the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, the Independent Living Program, the Charles McDowell Rehabilitation Center, the Kentucky Business Enterprises, and the Kentucky Assistive Technology Services Network. You will find detailed information about these programs and others in this report.

This past year was a record breaking year for the Office for the Blind. I offer my congratulations to the OFB staff and the many statewide partners that made this possible. With the continued dedication of the OFB staff and the valued support of the State Rehabilitation Council, the Office for the Blind will continue to make significant differences in the lives of Kentuckians with visual disabilities.

Sincerely,
Stephen M. Johnson
Executive Director

2,911 blind or visually impaired Kentuckians were served in 2006

425 successfully employed

1,147 worked toward a vocational goal

1,277 served by the Independent Living Program

62 vendors served by Kentucky Business Enterprises

Charles W. McDowell Center provided comprehensive services to 168 consumers

Who Are We?

In existence for 29 years, the **Kentucky Office for the Blind** is within the Department for Workforce Investment, an agency of the Education Cabinet. In addition to serving visually impaired individuals, we also partner with business and industry by helping employers hire qualified workers or retain a valued employee that has sustained a vision loss.

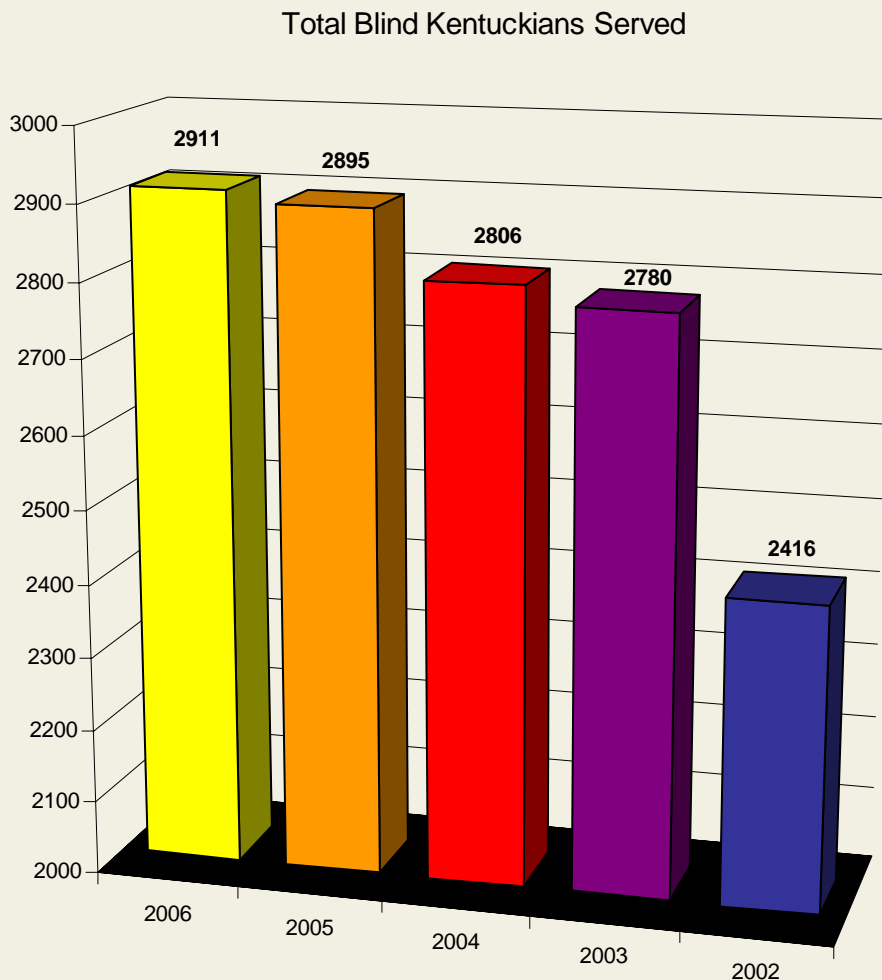
OFB programs are funded through a mix of federal and state resources. Approximately 12% of the annual budget comes from state General Fund dollars while the remaining 88% comes from federal grants and income generated by the programs themselves.

What Do We Do?

- * **Vocational Rehabilitation Program**
Assists individuals who are blind or visually impaired achieve their employment goals
- * **Independent Living Program**
Assists individuals who are blind or visually impaired to function independently in their homes and the community
- * **Charles W. McDowell Rehabilitation Center**
A state-of-the-art facility offering a variety of comprehensive training opportunities
- * **SEE World**
A low-vision products store located in the Charles W. McDowell Center, Louisville
- * **Business Enterprises**
Trains and places individuals for self-employment in vending and food service facilities
- * **Bioptic Driving Program**
Provides specialized training to qualified individuals to obtain a drivers license
- * **Deaf Blind Program**
Consumers with dual disabilities are offered specialized services to meet their needs
- * **Accessible Textbook Program**
Provides audio versions of books for students and others with a vision loss
- * **KY Assistive Technology Service Network (KATS)**
Assists individuals of any age and/or disability in finding and using appropriate Technology
- * **State Rehabilitation Council**
Analyzes OFB program effectiveness, makes recommendations, and measures consumer satisfaction
- * **Web Site at <http://blind.ky.gov>**
Provides comprehensive information regarding OFB services and resources

Office for the Blind 2006 Statistics

In 2006 the Kentucky Office for the Blind (OFB) served more blind and visually impaired Kentuckians and placed more consumers in the workforce than ever before. Since 2002 the total number of Kentuckians served has increased 21%, from 2,416 to 2,911. The Independent Living program has expanded from 976 to 1,277 consumers served, a 31% increase. In addition OFB assisted 425 consumers reach their employment goal and successfully enter the workforce this past year, which represents a 37% growth over the past five years. The Office for the Blind staff, consumers and statewide partners continue to work cooperatively each year to reach and surpass targeted goals.



Education Opportunities

As an agency in the Education Cabinet, the Office for the Blind is committed to providing post secondary education to our consumers. In 2006 OFB provided opportunities for 261 students to attend 58 Universities, Colleges and Technical Colleges in Kentucky and throughout the U.S. OFB provided assistance for students with tuition, books, housing, transportation and assistive technology.

Pepsi Contract to benefit blind students

A new exclusive state contract with the Pepsi Cola Bottlers of Kentucky will provide educational benefits for blind students. The Office for the Blind will receive \$20,000 a year for five years, totaling \$100,000. The funds will go toward tuition and books for postsecondary students who are blind or visually impaired.



Pictured from left to right: Richard Nesbitt, Director of Kentucky Business Enterprises; Education Cabinet Secretary Virginia G. Fox; Abby Cocanaugher, OFB consumer; Governor Ernie Fletcher; Vice President and General Manager Mike Brown, Kentuckiana Division of PepsiAmericas; Education Cabinet Deputy Secretary Laura E. Owens; and Executive Director Stephen Johnson, Office for the Blind.

INSIGHT...Postsecondary Preparation Week



Pictured from left to right: Stacy Timberlake, Junior, Greenup County High School; Cara Rocchi, Resident Assistant; JeRon Pardue, Junior, Kentucky School for the Blind (Jefferson County); Hope Bond, Junior, West Carter High School; Brett Morton, Senior, Kentucky School for the Blind (Lyon County); Emily Hurd, Fleming County High School; Brian Mullins, Resident Assistant; Brett Dahmke, Senior, Kentucky School for the Blind (Spencer County); and Kelci Risner, Junior, Kentucky School for the Blind (Shelby County).

The INSIGHT summer program at Morehead State University is a unique opportunity for high school juniors and seniors with visual impairments. The INSIGHT program is designed to create an environment where students can gain valuable information into what postsecondary education is all about. A few of the program components include: class scheduling, time management, study habits, college admissions, campus housing and campus orientation and mobility. Parents are also included in an orientation and final review of the students progress.

The coalition of partners involved in the program are: Morehead State University, University of Louisville Orientation and Mobility Graduate Program, The Big East Educational Cooperative of Ashland, The Kentucky School for the Blind, and the Kentucky Office for the Blind.

The 2007 INSIGHT Program will be held at Morehead State University in June 2007.

Vocational Rehabilitation Program

OFB provides vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with visual impairments assisting them in obtaining and maintaining gainful employment. Services are consistent with the individual's strengths, abilities, and interests allowing them the opportunity to make informed choices regarding their employment goals.

Services may include:

- * Diagnostics and evaluations
- * Counseling and guidance
- * Vocational Training
- * Employer services
- * Work Experience
- * Medical treatments, surgery & therapy
- * Rehabilitation technology & consultations
- * Occupational license, tools & equipment
- * On-the-job training
- * Job placement assistance
- * Bioptic driving training
- * Supported employment
- * Orientation and Mobility
- * Transition services
- * Interpreter services

Here's what we accomplished in 2006:

- * **425** successfully employed
- * **1,147** worked toward their future vocational goal
- * **222** received Orientation and Mobility training
- * **370** received Assistive Technology services
- * **28** received Deaf Blind services

Vocational Rehabilitation Success Stories

Jo Ellen Busch was born with congenital eye problems and lost all vision in her right eye at age 12. At the age of 26, she lost all but light perception in the left eye. In the fall of 2003, she contacted the Office for the Blind in Louisville for assistance in obtaining employment. In 2004, with assistance from her OFB Counselor, Brenda Hibberd and OFB Assistive Technology Specialist, Jenny Tyree, Jo Ellen became the first individual who is blind to be hired and receive specialized training by CitiCard as a Service Representative.

When CitiCard relocated to a new facility, issues occurred with the adaptive software Jo Ellen was using to perform her duties. Jo Ellen experienced a temporary layoff while CitiCard and the Office for the Blind worked collaboratively to solve these problems. In July of 2005, when a newly found compatible software screen reading program was installed, Jo Ellen returned to work at CitiCard where she is a valuable employee today. She is a true example of how perseverance and determination will lead to success in achieving personal goals.



Jo Ellen, 2006 Vocational Achievement Award Winner.



Ron Adams, 2006 Vocational Achievement Award Winner. Pictured with counselor, Norma McCormick

Ron Adams, born with congenital eye problems, was diagnosed at an early age with macular dystrophy and astigmatism in both eyes. He began services with OFB in 1999. Initially, Ron enrolled in classes at Southeast Community College in Whitesburg. Ron was in desperate need of employment in order to support his family, but the local labor market offered few career options for him. Ron made the decision along with his OFB Counselor, Norma McCormick, to participate in the IRS training program through Lion's World in Little Rock, Arkansas. Upon successful completion of the program, Ron obtained employment at the

IRS Service Center in Northern Kentucky as a Customer Services Representative. Ron has faced many personal and professional challenges during his rehabilitation program. Through it all his persistence and drive to accomplish his goals have carried him along the road of success.

Independent Living Program

The Kentucky Office for the Blind's Independent Living Program assists individuals who are blind or visually impaired perform activities associated with daily living. This involves teaching consumers new methods of performing personal and home management skills. Adaptive equipment such as talking clocks, kitchen aids and low vision magnifiers are provided to help individuals become more independent in their homes. Training and provision of adaptive equipment are based on the individual needs of each consumer.

After consumers develop independence, they often desire employment opportunities and choose to enter the Vocational Rehabilitation Program.

Here's what we accomplished in 2006:

- * **1277** individuals were served with Independent Living Services
- * **836** individuals received comprehensive training and services leading to independence
- * **441** individuals received short term services allowing continued independence



Idell has learned to travel safely in her community.

Idell Hunter, a resident of Paducah, KY, has always been an active person. She has been involved with church, raised a family, and for 26 years worked as a secretary. In 2004, she experienced a loss of vision and was diagnosed with diabetic retinopathy.

Faced with this new circumstance, she wanted to learn skills that would allow her to live independently and travel safely in her neighborhood and community. To accomplish these goals her counselor, Angi Carter, provided individualized training in her home including instruction in the use of adaptive methods and devices. In addition, the counselor coordinated other learning opportunities including extensive mobility training. Mrs. Hunter worked hard

incorporating her new skills into her daily living activities, and today she manages her own home and is able to travel safely in her community.

Deaf Blind Program

In 2003, the Office for the Blind and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation signed a memorandum of agreement entering a collaborative working relationship by sharing resources to jointly serve the deaf blind population. As a result of this partnership, 26 consumers on dual caseloads were placed in competitive employment. Stephanie Hallum is one of the consumers that participated and benefited from this collaborative effort receiving vocational rehabilitation, independent living, interpreting and assistive technology services.



Stephanie Hallum, 2006 Vocational Achievement Award Winner. Pictured with OVR Counselor Laura Herman and OFB Counselor, Darla Smith

Stephanie Hallum, a native of Henderson, Kentucky, was born with optic atrophy. In addition to her vision impairment, she has a hearing loss requiring bilateral hearing aids. After high school, Stephanie set two goals for herself. The first was to live independently and the second was to obtain an employment opportunity. With services directed by Dorothy Brame, OFB's Deaf Blind coordinator, Stephanie has achieved both of her goals.

Dorothy arranged for a team of specialists and trainers to work with Stephanie, including her Office for the Blind Counselor, Darla Smith and her Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Laura Herman.

Stephanie now lives in her own apartment, preparing meals and performing all of her home management duties. Stephanie achieved her goal for employment by working in a day care center in Henderson. This is a perfect placement for her as she has a great love of children.

Stephanie is to be congratulated on her great determination in achieving her goals.

“See” World

“See” World is a low-vision product store operated by the Kentucky Office for the Blind. Housed in the Charles W. McDowell Rehabilitation Center located at 8412 Westport Road Louisville, Kentucky. “See” World offers a wide variety of magnifiers, lamps, talking products, kitchen aids, medical aids, telephones, closed circuit televisions (CCTV), games and books in large print and Braille. “See” World is open to the public with store hours of 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday and is also available online at [Seeworld.ky.gov](https://seeworld.ky.gov).

Kirsten Schmidt, the Manager of “See” World, is available to provide presentations at your facility to showcase the most up-to-date products for persons with visual impairments.

“SEE” World Low-Vision Products Store

Kentucky Office for the Blind
Charles W. McDowell Center
8412 Westport Road
Louisville, KY 40242
502-429-4460
On-line <https://seeworld.ky.gov>
Hours: Monday-Friday 9-5



“See” World can meet all your low-vision needs. Kirsten assisting consumer with a product.

Charles W. McDowell Rehabilitation Center

This modern residential facility located in Louisville, Kentucky, offers individualized training in state-of-the-art speech and Braille communication devices and new computer technologies that can assist individuals with employment opportunities and activities of daily living. Additional classes are available in alternative housekeeping, cooking, and community travel skills. Specialists at the McDowell Center help Kentuckians with visual impairments learn to function independently in their homes, schools, workplaces and communities.

Here's what we accomplished in 2006:

- * **168** individuals from across Kentucky received comprehensive services



McDowell Braille Class



McDowell Home Management



Orientation and Mobility Training



McDowell Keyboarding Class

Accessible Textbook Program

The Kentucky Office for the Blind administers a program in two areas of our state that research and procure textbooks in alternative formats. Formats include two-track cassette recordings, DAISY recordings, and electronic text files on CD obtained from publishers. Community volunteers are also solicited to reproduce textbooks and other materials unavailable in existing useable formats. Professional training materials are also provided in alternative format for individuals in the workplace.

The Accessible Textbook Program maintains the state library of alternative materials and provides services to individuals including elementary, secondary and postsecondary schools. The **Lexington Office** serves residents and students who are EAST of Frankfort, while the **Paducah Office** serves those WEST of Frankfort.

An online database catalog of books recorded onto cassette tape or CD can be accessed at <http://blind.ky.gov/PublicVRULibrarySearch.asp>.

Here's what we accomplished in 2006:

- * **137** individuals were served
- * **113** digital books were processed

Two Locations in Kentucky

Linda Townzen, Coordinator
Paducah Accessible Textbook Service
220 North 8th Street, Suite E
Paducah, Kentucky 42001
Phone: 270-575-7056
Or toll free 888-896-0438

Jo Stewart, Coordinator
Lexington Accessible Textbook Service
Room 2, Alumni Gym Building
University of Kentucky
Lexington, Kentucky 40506-0029
Phone: 859-257-6602
Or toll free 800-306-3472

Bioptic Driving Program

The Kentucky Bioptic Driving Law, (KRS 186.576 to 186.579) was enacted by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky on January 1, 2001. Kentucky's Bioptic Driving Program helps qualifying Kentuckians regain independence through special training that enables them to obtain a driver's license. Individuals participate in a visual examination and evaluation to determine the functional use of their existing vision. Evaluation and testing are provided through an optometrist or ophthalmologist and a Bioptic Driving Specialist. With a bioptic device, the individual must meet the visual acuity and visual field standards of the law. After qualifying for a learner's permit, completing extensive behind the wheel training, and successful testing by the Kentucky State Police, individuals will receive a driver's license. Since the program began, the Drivers Licensing Division of the Transportation Cabinet has granted licenses in Kentucky to 104 Bioptic drivers. As a result, individuals have been able to obtain first-time employment or upgrade to better jobs. Some who were in jeopardy of losing their jobs were able to maintain their employment because they obtained a driver's license.

Here's what we accomplished in 2006:

38 bioptic drivers were trained and licensed



Kentucky Business Enterprises

Kentucky Business Enterprises (KBE) is one of the nation's leading vending and food service programs operated by people who are blind. The program trains and places blind individuals as self-employed operators/managers of snack bars, cafeterias, and automated vending facilities in public and private buildings across the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

Here's what we accomplished in 2006:

- * Opened two new vending locations
Ashland Federal Correctional Institution
Wendell H. Ford National Guard Training Center
- * Trained, licensed and placed two new vendors in KBE facilities
- * Negotiated and awarded new snack and coffee interstate contract
- * Added five new satellite vending locations in 2006



Wayman Elliott from Grayson, Kentucky, is the newest licensed vendor in the Kentucky Blind vending program. He manages the vending and food service areas at the Ashland Federal Correctional Institution.

Before entering the KBE program, Wayman worked eleven years for GTech Corporation. His technical background and experience is proving to be a valuable asset in operating his vending business.

The staff and visitors at the institution are extremely pleased with Wayman's dedication and commitment to providing quality vending services.

State Committee of Blind Vendors 2005/2006

Charles Allen—Chair
Mac Carnes—Vice Chair
Brice Howard
Mike Hartsock
George Stokes

Carole Morris
Randy Hester
Dennis Franklin
Jerry Grimes
Tim Davis

KY Assistive Technology Services Network (KATS)

KATS Network is the Kentucky Assistive Technology project operating within its lead agency, the Office for the Blind. Funded through the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, the KATS Network consists of a statewide network of organizations and individuals connecting to enhance the availability of assistive technology. The mission of this collaborative system is to make assistive technology information, devices and services easily obtainable for people of any age and/or disability. In addition to the Coordinating Center located in the McDowell Center in Louisville, there are four AT regional resources centers, Bluegrass Technology Center—*Lexington*, enTECH—*Louisville*, Redwood Rehab Center—*Ft. Mitchell*, WKATC—*Owensboro*, and two partnering satellite centers. Visit KATS online at <http://www.katsnet.org> or call 800-327-5287.

Here's what we accomplished in 2006:

- * **10,193** Consumers and Professionals served
- * **12,517** Individual trainings, consultations, and demonstrations
- * **3,749** Group training participants from **158** workshops
- * **1,556** Assistive technology equipment, devices, or materials loaned
- * **461** Recycled computers provided to consumers
- * **122,764** Downloads of information from the KATS Network website
- * **\$316,857** AT equipment upgrades for demonstration and lending



AT Lab
Redwood Rehab Center
Ft. Mitchell

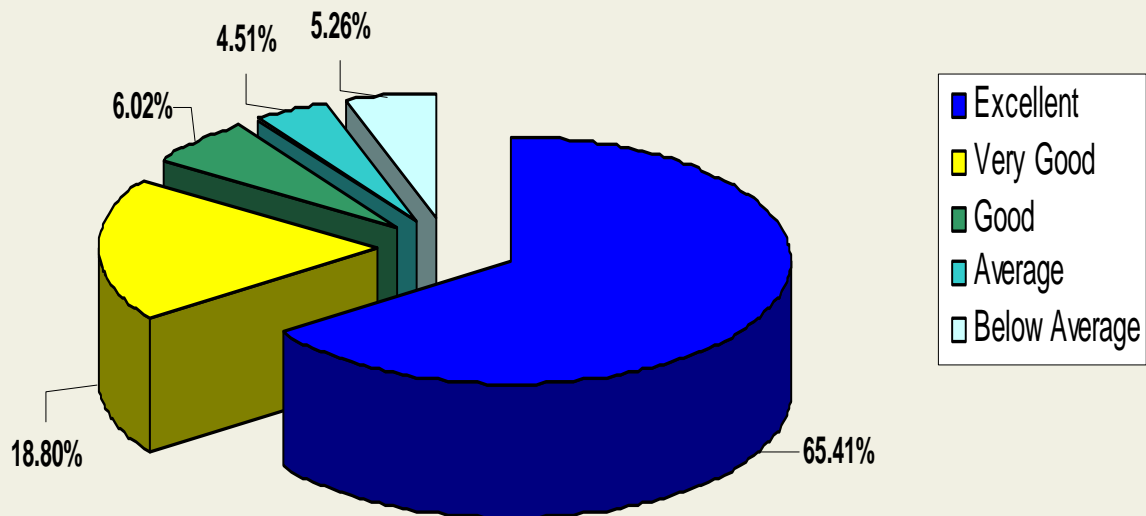


AT Lab
Western KY AT Center
Owensboro

State Rehabilitation Council

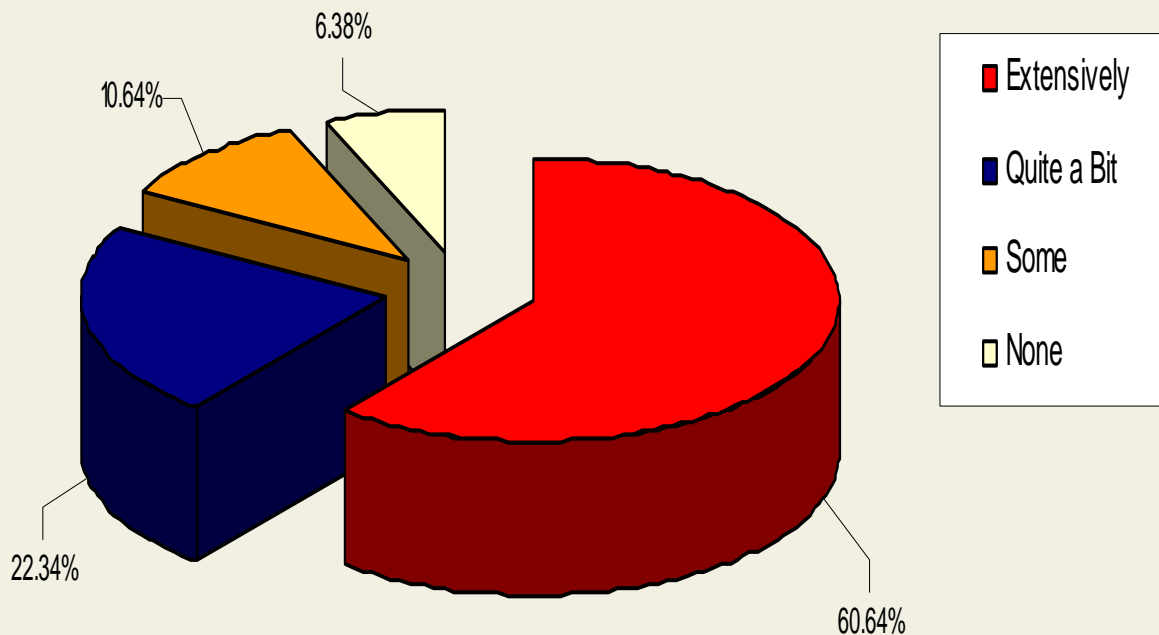
The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is established in Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (ACT), and 34 CFR 361.16-361.17 of its implementing regulations and must be in place for the state to receive federal funding. The SRC is a group representing business and industry, education and individuals with visual impairments. The Governor appoints council members for a three-year term. The council works in partnership with the Kentucky Office for the Blind in evaluating the agencies provision of vocational rehabilitation services. The SRC monitors the effectiveness of services performed by the agency to individuals with disabilities in achieving employment outcomes.

The Council is responsible for the oversight and approval of the agency State Plan. They review and analyze the results of the consumer satisfaction surveys for the vocational rehabilitation services the agency provides. The 2006 Overall Consumer Satisfaction is outlined in the graph below.



The overall results of the survey show that 90.23% of consumers served reported the quality of services from OFB good to excellent. 91% of consumers surveyed indicated that through these quality services OFB did a good or excellent job in meeting their service needs. The State Rehabilitation Council will conduct a full review of the satisfaction survey results identifying service trends and needs.

The 2006 survey showed consumers felt the vocational rehabilitation staff was professional (91.47%), skilled (89.68%) and knowledgeable (89.22%) regarding area resources and supports. 82.98% of consumers reported a high level of involvement in the decision making process in setting goals in the development of their Individual Plan for Employment. The results of consumer input in the decision making process is outlined in the graph below.



State Rehabilitation Council Members

Charlie Allen	Eugene Willis
Shannon Caldwell	Darrell Buford
Dr. Robert Mackey	Mitch Dahmke
Bill Deatherage	Cecil Cox
Pam Glisson	Freda Shipman
Gerry Gordon-Brown	Opal Spencer
Jennifer Holladay	Scott Trimble
Carol McElfresh	Mike Harrod
Dr. Ron Milliman	Carla Ruschival
Juda Potter	Adam Ruschival
Gerry Rader	

Where Are We Located?

The Kentucky Office for the Blind central office is located in Frankfort. There are also ten field offices located throughout Kentucky. Each field office is staffed with Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and other support persons that serve their local geographic area. Every office has a toll free phone number allowing easy and free access to all Kentuckians.

Central Office:

209 St. Clair, P O Box 757
Frankfort, KY 40602-0757
502-564-4754
800-321-6668
502-564-2951 FAX

Field Offices

Ashland

411 19th Street
Ashland, KY 41101
606-920-2000 or 800-334-6881
606-920-2001 FAX

Louisville

8412 Westport Road
Louisville, KY 40242
502-429-4460 or 800-346-2115
502-429-7101 FAX

Bowling Green

400 East Main Street
Suite 302
Bowling Green, KY 42101
270-746-7479 or 800-222-1215
270-746-7481 FAX

Owensboro

3000 Alvey Park Dr., West
Owensboro, KY 42303
270-687-7306 or 800-334-6929
270-687-7526 FAX

Elizabethtown

409 North Miles Street
Elizabethtown, KY 42701
270-766-5126 or 800-760-6891
270-766-5125 FAX

Paducah

220 North 8th Street
Suite E
Paducah, KY 42001
270-575-7315 or 800-334-6945
270-575-7987 FAX

Florence

8020 Veterans Memorial Dr.
Suite 100
Florence, KY 41042
859-371-3380 or 800-334-6895
859-371-0379 FAX

Prestonsburg

16 Bingham Street
Prestonsburg, KY 41653
606-889-1685 or 800-334-6940
606-889-1686 FAX

Lexington

153 Patchen Dr., Suite 17
Lexington, KY 40517
859-246-2111 or 800-291-8424
859-246-2112 FAX

Somerset

650 North Main Street
Gateway Center, Suite 240
Somerset, KY 42501
606-677-4042 or 800-895-3863
606-677-4043 FAX